

Article

The Open

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Thinking means venturing beyond—Ernst Bloch¹

This mortal creature called ‘man,’ in so far as s/he is mortal, is an open existence, which means, as existing being, s/he already always belongs to his own coming into existence. It is this question of the event of coming that concerns us here. Here begins our voyage of thinking, for thinking too is a kind of voyage, which must venture forth ceaselessly, to what is beyond and not yet. Thinking must affirm this ‘Not yet,’ this messianic, redemptive fulfillment, if it has to affirm this open-ness of existence itself; otherwise thinking is not worth troubling about.

In the Open darkness and light, remembrance and oblivion, coming into existence and disappearing in death play their originary co-belonging, or co-figuration. Existence belongs to this opening and is exposed *to its coming to presence*: it is on the basis of this originary opening, this originary *historical* which is revealed to this mortal being called ‘man,’ on the basis of this revelation, man finds something like politics and history. There thus comes into existence out of this freedom, out of this “play space”², this field called ‘polis’³ where there takes place war and festival, where historical revolutions tear apart history, brings ruptures and discontinuities in the very mode of his existence, where man seeks the foundation of his own foundation (which is his metaphysical task), where occurs the dialectics of negativity between man and man, where man puts at stake his own death, his own dissolution, and by the power of his own dissolution stands in relation to the total world that he seeks to dominate. This means that man’s attempts to metaphysically found his own political and historical existence must presuppose a far more originary non-foundation, the differentiating revealing of the open, the ungrounded spacing play, or playing space of natality and mortality.

Would a politics and metaphysics, a history and polis be possible if there would not *already* hold sway the open? Would such a polis and man’s

¹ *The Principle of Hope*, vol. 1, trans. by Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995), 5.

² Günter Figal, following Heidegger, calls this “play space” of the open as freedom, where freedom is no longer understood as capacity of the human endowed with free will, but on the basis of the originary “play space” on the basis of which any activity of the human is at all carried out. See Günter Figal, *For a Philosophy of Freedom and Strife: Politics, Aesthetics, Metaphysics*, trans. by Wayne Klein (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).

³ Here ‘polis’ is no longer understood in its juridico legislative determination as “city state,” but in a more originary manner, as mortal existents’ more originary opening to each other.

metaphysical foundation of his own ground be possible if there were not already given the promise of the *coming*, the opening, which thereby is intimated, not in the predicative logic of his metaphysics and his history, but in the pre-predicative lightning flash of language, in a poetic Saying? This pre-predicative lightning, this un-pre-thinkable must have already placed man in relation to his outside, to the outside of his foundation, exposing him to his finitude and abyssal mortality, to the immemorial promise of coming into existence that precedes the negativity of death that man undertakes on his own behalf. How to name this historical before history, this emergence of history, or, the birth of history itself, the open which is otherwise than and before the 'meta' of *his* 'metaphysics'? What would naming of this time be if this time must already occur before time (before man come to present himself to himself), and therefore before the name, this time that must *already* occur as simultaneity of all times so that the whole eternity of time reveals to man beforehand, on the basis of which man gives himself his own time, the time of his history and the time of his politics? As if already always there must be granted to the mortal a time before his time, before the time of his own—not this or that time, nor another time, but time *temporalizing* itself—in so far as it is on the basis of time temporalizing itself, on the basis of this eternity there manifests for man his historicity and his politics, his metaphysics and his ethics? As if there occurs before all naming a name which is itself without the name, and is therefore the event of naming itself, the very event of language itself? Which naming language of the mortal would be able to name this name outside the name, let alone exhausting it in the name? As if there occurs a historical opening before history, a promise beyond metaphysics and beyond politics, a configuration of coming into existing and mortality that is outside the labor of death which man undertakes on his own behalf, a revelation to him his outside which is outside his domination and mastery, outside his power and labor, a name which is outside the naming language of mortals, yet which first depriving man his foundation and power, gives him the task to name the nameless, bestowing upon him the event of language on the basis of which he knows his world, and grasps the entities that has become and given in the world. The task of the mortal naming language of this linguistic being called 'man' would, then, be the very task of the impossible. If that is so, then the essence of this mortal language is not primarily categorical-predicative grasp of what has presently become of the historical world and entities therein constituting the historical totality, nor would it be to exhaust the name without name in the signification of the world. We neither know the open on the basis of (what we generally know as history) history, nor we know the world's coming into existence on the basis of predication. We would then have to say rather that *language is the event of the world*, this mortal existential world for this existent 'man,' or, even better, *the event of language*—before any predicative-categorical cognition and before the historical foundation of the historical world—intimates that *coming* or *birth* (which is to be understood before any biological determination of it) by throwing mortals to his outside, by exposing him his outside, which is outside his presence and power, outside politics and

outside history. The event of language already always inserts this mortal being called ‘man,’ in an immemorial past, into this co-figuration of mortality and natality, of past and future and presence in a simultaneity that is called ‘eternity.’ This eternity, which is not the mere void of time, precedes and follows the historical totalities, outside the speculative historical time, and remains as an eternal remnant, irreducibly keeping us *open* to the promise of coming time beyond violence and beyond negativity.⁴

The open is thus the spacing and timing as *play* which grants beforehand the name of this promise, or promise of the name. In this way, this mortal being called ‘man’ is open to the coming where the eternity of his future, this remnant of time announces itself. Therefore this mortal called ‘man’ has a relation to that which is more than, outside of, otherwise than what he has made himself out of his own capacity and possibility, for he is not only what he has founded on the basis of his own ground; a basis otherwise his

⁴ Martin Heidegger, in his 1942-43 lectures on Parmenides, thinks ‘the open’ in an essential relation to Parmenides’ essential word *Aletheia*, as the self-disclosing advent of Being to being that maintains a simultaneous closure of Being. This simultaneous non-simultaneity of the open that initiates the inception, or beginning, is the very timing of time or coming on the basis of which man founds his history, his politics and ethics. The essential task, at the exhaustion of certain metaphysics, is to release (*Gelassenheit*), to free unto that ungrounded alethic opening so that historical man gives himself the task of the inception anew, that means, to renew the promise of the inception. “Indeed, historical man,” says, Heidegger, “in so far as he is, always belongs within the bestowal of Being. Man, and only he, constantly sees into the open, in the sense of the free, by which the “it is” liberates each being to itself and on the basis of this liberation looks at man in his guardianship of the open. Although man and only he constantly sees in the open, i.e. encounters beings in the free of Being, in order to be struck by them, yet he is not thereby entitled to bring Being itself explicitly into its ownmost, i.e., to being it into the open (the free), i.e., to poetize Being, to think it, and say it.” No doubt for Heidegger this historical people has remained to be the Germans. This historical people called “German humanity,” who are “the most metaphysical people” are called upon to sacrifice themselves in this poetizing task of *sacrifice* for the sake of “preservation of the truth of Being”: “The highest form of suffering is dying one’s death as a sacrifice for the preservation of the truth of Being. This sacrifice is the purest experience of the voice of Being. What if German humanity which, like the Greek, is called upon to poetize and think, and what if this German humanity must first preserve the voice of Being...Thus what if the voice of the beginning should announce itself in our historical destiny?” See Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. by Andre Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1992), 151 and 167. In this way Heidegger’s crypto-politics of disclosure has remained, even till the end of his career, even after his dissociation from Nazi politics, intimately bounded up with—at the least obvious level—a certain historical, metaphysical vision of the German humanity who is called upon to sacrifice on this purest task of poetizing and renewing the promise of inception, or the inception of promise itself, like the Greek. Veronique Fóti in her book *Heidegger and the Poets* painstaking brings out Heidegger’s crypto-politics of the Open, especially in the chapter of the book that she devotes to Heidegger’s reading of Rilke. See especially the third chapter of her book, “The Sphere and the Ball: Rilke’s (Dis) figuration,” in *Heidegger and the Poets: Poiesis, Sophia, Techné*, (New Jersey, London: Humanities Press, 1992), 30-43. Thus the very promise of Heidegger’s philosophical thinking that has sought to open up a thinking outside the reductive totalization inherent in modern technology, is immediately clouded by the archaic historical-metaphysical vision of a certain archi-crypto-political poetology. This present writer, acutely aware of the danger of this crypto politics, seeks to rescue the promise of the Open without the historical-metaphysical vision of Heidegger, and thereby reading Heidegger, to a great extent, against Heidegger.

basis must be granted to him, or, as Schelling says, must be “loaned”⁵ to him as pure, incalculable, non-conditional, non-economic *gift*. Finding himself in the midst of the created existence, where the entirety of existence and entirety of time is revealed to him, granted to him in the lightning flash, he configures, weaves into time the possibility of his existence and waits for redemption. It is the demand of the non-conditional that there must be condition for him: hence he has his politics, his history, and his dialectics.

Thinking too takes place, or presupposes this originary revelation, opening, not the opening of this or that, not the opening of something as this thing, or someone as this one, but more originary opening where something or someone arrives. Plato calls this originary experience that alone enables experience itself, which is the possibility of experience itself as such, where the beginning begins in the open - as ‘Wonder,’ or ‘Astonishment’ at the origin: there lies the birth of thinking henceforth is called *philosophy*. If that is so, philosophy begins a non-conditional opening of thinking itself. That means philosophy must already presuppose the holding sway of the Open, thinking that must already be promised to man in the open, out of his finitude, that means, out of his exposure to the open. Therefore for philosophical thinking finitude or mortality is not one question among others, because questioning itself begins as a non-conditional experience of finitude or mortality. Therefore all questions that man raises are finite questions. Man philosophizes not because he is capable of the faculty of thinking, but because he is first of all mortal and finite that strikes him, surprises him, astonishes him. This event of thinking attunes the mortals to a fundamental mood, or fundamental attunement of *astonishment*, astonishment at the event of thinking.

The coming of thinking, the event of thinking astonishes the mortals—since (as Heidegger says)⁶ we do not go to thinking, but thinking comes to us—and promises him the gift of time, the time to come, the very future of thinking. It is this promise of the future, granted to us by the event of thinking, and that attunes us to the fundamental mood of astonishment, abandons us, first of all, to an abandonment, to an originary non-condition—which Plato calls ‘death.’ It is this experience, or, non-experience of abandonment, or mortality’s gift of time, the gift that astonishes us: it is this non-condition that is the birth of thinking called *philosophy*. Thus quoting Plato, Schelling says:

He who wishes to place himself in the beginning of a truly free philosophy must abandon even God. Here we say: who wishes to maintain it, he will lose it; and who gives up, he will find it. Only he has come to the ground of himself and has known the whole depth of life who has once abandoned everything, and has himself been

⁵ See F. W. J. von Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, trans. by James Gutmann (La Salle: Illinois, 1936).

⁶ “We never come to thoughts, they come to us,” Heidegger writes in “The Thinker as Poet,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row), 6.

abandoned by everything. He for whom everything disappeared and who saw himself alone with the infinite: a great step which Plato compared to death.⁷

This non-conditional event of thinking that surprises us, astonishes us and bestows upon us the gift of thinking, is more originary than the system of that philosophical logic that claims to begin with the immediate that immediately passes into the mediation. It is because the event of thinking, and its fundamental mood of astonishment exceeds any categorical grasp of a philosophical logic that is based upon predicative proposition, for the movement of a predicative proposition can only be a negative, and hence, an immanent movement; in itself it is no movement at all. But the movement of mortality is a movement transcendent, and therefore it is movement at all. In this sense, Schelling, preceding and influencing Kierkegaard denies movement in Hegelian speculative logic, though the very effort of the speculative logic is to include movement into it. In so far as Hegel understood movement only as negative, it can only be an immanent movement, hence based upon the predicative proposition. The event that begins the movement is a leap outside, for all coming into presence is transcendence, and hence is outside of all predication and judgment that constitute the speculative historical totality. Therefore it is not surprising that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* begins its movement, or rather Hegel likens (which is not mere analogy) this very phenomenological movement of the dialectical-historical to the movement of a speculative proposition, which is an immanent movement. Therefore nothing surprises, astonishes us in Hegelian speculative-historical system, for what is missing there is the very ecstasy of the event, the leap of the outside, and the thinking of the inception which is outside of a logical generation of a monotonous, dull immediate immediately passing into the mediation.

This is the very reason that Franz Rosenzweig, following Schelling, begins his *The Star of Redemption* with the complaint that the philosophical system that claims to be the cognition of the All, is deaf to the cries of mortality, for in that speculative philosophical discourse of totality, nothing and nobody dies. The speculative system for which singulars are reduced to the particular moments of the One, there is no place for the singulars, the singulars for whom their deaths are of utmost existential interest that refuses to serve the interest of the anonymous Universality. What is missing in the Hegelian speculative-dialectical determination of history is none else but death, death that is outside and otherwise than the negative, death which can not persist while carrying its predicates in the way that Hegel's Subject carries its own dissolution as its predicate. If speculative proposition is like the subject that persists as the same even in its own dissolution and accidents, then death that does not persist in its apparition is a proposition without predicate; this death refuses to *work*, it refuses to produce its own predicates, if the meaning

⁷ Quoted by Martin Heidegger in *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985), 6-7.

of *work* in Hegelian metaphysics is none but production of predicates. It is because of this, though it is the very effort of a speculative logic of history to think death or mortality, it has made death only a result of the very process of negativity, a death no longer event but *work* that serves the interests of the Universal. Such a speculative discourse of universality, founded upon the predicative proposition of a speculative judgment, is devoid of the event, for event does not have the character of persistence of negativity. By taking away the poisonous sting of mortality, such a speculative totalization allows itself to forget the immemorial Open and the promise, the non-conditional gift loaned therein. The remembrance of the immemorial inception, of the Open before totality, of the gift of mortality before the negative work of death and the promise given in a beginning before any beginning, and therefore given in a *historical* coming into existence before history: this remembrance is renewed at moments when history interrupts itself, pauses itself, or when history itself claims to have accomplished its own end and to have exhausted its innermost resources and possibilities. Therefore the questions of promise and gift, of inception and future arise only in relation to the questions concerning *exit* from such a metaphysics that marks the dominant thinking of the Greco-Roman civilization. The question of the *pause* of history is, as it is clear, is the very question of mortality and the open, when each time history itself has to leap over the abyss yawning wide open. This history is not the history what Hegel the metaphysician dreamt of; it is not the history where abysses are like transitional moments that simultaneously bridge themselves. The pauses or interruptions of history are not differential epochal moments belonging to the homogenous, universal unity of a speculative proposition that carries with its own dissolutions and thereby making these dissolutions as moments of the bridge. They are rather, in their radical finitude, *singular* epochal ruptures that refuse to be gathered into logical principle of unity. Their logic of becoming is not the dialectical-speculative logic of speculative proposition. Their caesural logic is more like what Hölderlin calls as 'becoming in perishing': they are epochal ruptures whose becoming is simultaneous with their own dissolution so that no self-same Subject of universal history carries its accidents and predicates to the dusk of its process. These epochal ruptures, which are caesural, do not follow the transitional logic of generation and therefore unlike movement of Hegelian concepts, they do not belong to the undying self-same flow of eternity. They rather form what both Schelling and Hölderlin already before Hegel came to constitute the system call '*Zusammenhang*': the caesural configuration, cohesion, a holding together of what do not make transition into the other, each rhythm in relative autonomy from the other, not because each rhythm in itself has its ontological ground, but each rhythm brings simultaneously its counter thrust, a counter pressure, its dissolution, in a kind of lightning flash that arrive simultaneously to bring its disappearance. Such a mortality of the epochal ruptures is not the negativity of death which the movement of the speculative proposition brings into; the mortality of the lightning flash does not maintain its own dissolution within it, and therefore does not make itself into the work of producing universal history.

Already before Hegel came to constitute his system, Hölderlin in 1800 wrote an essay called *Becoming in Dissolution*. Not the world, this or that world, but “the world of all words” presents itself in a time which itself, each time, a beginning of time, or, “in the decline, the instant or more genetically, in the becoming of the instant and in the beginning of time and world . . . This decline...is felt... at precisely that moment and to precisely that extent that existence dissolves, the newly entering, the youthful, the potential is also felt.” Each such moment is this ‘heavenly fire,’ is this infinite interweaving of becoming and dissolution when “everything infinitely permeates” each other “the pain and joys, discord and peace, movement and rest, form and formless”⁸. Here unlike the Hegelian notion of infinity that has finitude within it, the infinite and finite forms the “monstrous coupling” which is not ‘system,’ but *Zusammenhang*—of mortality and natality, becoming and dissolution, presentation and the unrepresentable, infinite and finitude, excess and containment, mourning and joy. The open is the “play space” where there occurs “this monstrous coupling” which is the very event of history itself as disjunctive, caesural, non-conditional opening, and not events that belong to history as finite, attenuated figures of discontinuities. Commenting on Hölderlin, Françoise Dastur writes,

What Hölderlin wants to think is not the development of a thing from its initial stage to its final stage, even via the intermediary of a ‘qualitative leap’ which would introduce here a relative discontinuity, but rather the entire reflux of disappearance into appearance and of death into life. What he wants to understand is not the succession of epochs and the interval that separates the break but the epochal break itself and the radical discontinuity of history.⁹

What is at stake is not events that are successive, attenuated, and relative finite realization of the One, the Universal, like the succession of differential nows that are the differential and immanent variations of the Now¹⁰. The Universal, One Now will be then determined as contraction of the

⁸ Friedrich Hölderlin, “Becoming in Dissolution,” in *Essays and Letters on Theory*, trans. by Thomas Pfau (Albany, State University New York Press, 1988), 96-100.

⁹ Françoise Dastur, *Telling Time: Sketch of a Phenomenological Chronology*, trans. by Edward Bullard (London & New Brunswick, NJ, 2000), 62-63.

¹⁰ Hegel writes in *Phenomenology of Spirit*: “(1) I point out the ‘Now,’ and it is asserted to be the truth. I point it out, however, as something that *has been*, or as something that has been superseded; I set aside the first truth. (2) I now assert as the second truth that it *has been*, that it is superseded. (3) But what has been, *is not*; I set aside the second truth, its *having been*, its supersession, and thereby negate the negation of the ‘Now,’ and thus return to the first assertion, that the ‘Now’ *is*. The ‘Now,’ and pointing out the ‘Now,’ are thus so constituted that neither the one nor the other is something immediate and simple, but a movement which contains various moments. A *This* is posited; but it is rather an *other* that is posited, or the *This* is superseded; and this *otherness*, or the setting aside of the first, is itself *in turn set aside*, and so has returned into the

plurality of nows, and is continuous in all through its relative variations as nows.¹¹ But the epochal ruptures and abysses of history are not mere relative realization of the Universal history; they are neither merely immanent products of this history nor a result of that speculative dialectical process. The caesura which Hölderlin speaks of is the mortality which is outside the immanent negativity of history; it is the very non-conditional condition of history, given as gift at the very inception of that history where inception and finitude, natality and mortality, becoming and dissolution are united in a ‘monstrous coupling.’ Mortality, which is the non-negative condition, is not a consequence of that history, but premise whose judgment can not be delivered in the name of what is only consequent and the derivative. In so far as judgment derives its character only from predication, it is therefore outside any predicative logic. If the question of the event is to be thought anew here which not mere relative realization of universal history is, then the event has to be thought outside the closure of the speculative historical logic of predication. The event is to be thought, then, in relation to the immemorial gift of mortality itself, in relation to that originary disjunction and caesura, belonging neither to the economy of work, nor to the work of negativity. To think of the event is to think *not* what has become as a result of the work of negativity, but the not yet inception of a finite history where mortality and natality, becoming and dissolution are there simultaneously. It is here the question of the promise of coming for the mortal being called ‘man’ is to be posed.

If man is opened towards the coming, if his existence is not to be consummated by the mere given-ness of what has become, if he does not end his voyage as an already finished and accomplished existence—for he exists in the *promise* of the future - it is so far as his existence already belongs to the originary holding sway of the opening, which is *each time, (that means singularly, (without belonging to universal history))* finite and caesural. How to think of the opening more originary than any genesis and generation (because it must already be granted to man, as it were a gift), an *in-ception* or beginning before any beginning that comes to pass by, a *coming* before anything that comes and vanishes? Does this coming and inception, this opening before genesis and generation, appear like any other phenomenon in the world that has become,

first. However, this first, thus reflected into itself, is not exactly the same as it was to begin with, viz, something *immediate*; on the contrary, on the contrary, it is *something that is reflected into itself*, or a *simple* entity which, in its otherness, remains what it is: a Now which is an absolute plurality of Nows...The pointing-out of the Now is itself the movement which expresses what Now is in truth, viz, a result, or a plurality of Nows all taken together; and pointing-out is the experience of learning that Now is a *universal*. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller (New Delhi: Motilal Benarasidass, 1998), parag. 107-108, 63-64.

¹¹ Thus Hegel writes in *Philosophy of Nature*: “The dimensions of time, *present, future, and past*, are the becoming of externality as such, and the resolution of it into the differences of being as passing over into nothing, and of nothing as passing over into being. The immediate vanishing of these differences into *singularity* is the present as *Now* which, as singularity, is *exclusive* of the other moments, and yet at the same time completely *continuous* in them, and is only this vanishing of its being into nothing and of nothing into its Being.” *Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 37.

in so far as this unapparent enables the apparition as such, on the basis of which mortals constitute their politics and history, their world and their meanings? In each product of labor that constitutes the historical artifice and manifests for mortals his field of *polis*, *polis* where he enjoys his feasts and suffers his death, in each such historical product and in such historical manifestation of the world, the unapparent phenomenon which we call 'mortality' haunts and an unspeakable mourning watches over. If the world history and its politics is the product of the negative labor of man who puts at stake his life and death by making his own death, his own absence, his own disappearing itself appear as history and manifest as politics, would this manifestation be possible without the more originary *polemos*, a more originary revelation, the unapparent apparition of mortality, but that is without violence and before any negativity, the *polemos* between opening and the exigency of closure that first of all reveals the mortals the very unapparent of all appearing, the very *event* as such? In what language and naming of the mortals—since for the mortals the world opens itself to them only on the basis of language and the name—this opening be named, if this inception makes manifest first of all something like 'politics' and 'history,' which for that matter precedes anything like 'politics' and 'history'? In what language of naming man must address what is outside 'history' and outside 'politics' if that originary promise of the outside, the originary opening in non-violence must first of all call mortals to the very task of naming; or, in an inverse order, how not to name if naming is not to be exhausted only in naming the nameable? If the naming language of the mortals is not exhausted in naming only the nameable, if the naming language of the mortals is promised in the opening outside the activity and the negative labor of history and politics, then this passivity outside being passive and being active, this inception of time must precede the temporality that is then predicated and predicted in the language of logic. Hence there arrives and comes a temporality of language without death, a remnant time of language (or a remnant language of time) that remains after each and every predication, a faintly fainting away, barely audible, of a mournfulness, which is thus more originary than the predicative-apophantic language of logic. The irreducible remainder of language is not a consequence to the predicative-apophantic proposition, and therefore is not a result of a series of subtractions of predications; in other words, the irreducible remainder is not negative remainder, but a positive given as gift, since a series of subtraction to begin an affirmative positive must already always be there, which no predication can apophantically recuperate. In the same way, there occurs an irreducible caesura of history which is not a consequence of already realized universal history. *It is therefore the language of naming that is always outside the language of judgment and outside the judgment of history: it is rather what calls history to fulfill its promise*, which is irreducibly there at the very inception of history, at the very inception of anything like politics. The remembrance of this inception, its finitude, its incessant renewal in any presencing of presence, and hence fulfillment of this immemorial promise means that the historical task of politics and the political task of history is not merely the dialectical-speculative memory of what has

become of the world, but rather to remember the immemorial, to fulfill in the future and in the not yet what is promised in the past. To remember the immemorial: this distinction between remembrance and memory is co-relative to the distinction between the language of naming and the language of judgment, between the originary epochal caesura of history and relative epochal ruptures, in so far as the language of the naming remembers, at the very limit of cognition and judgment, at the very limit of memory and its genesis, what is immemorial promise, not yet impaired by the violence of cognition.

This logic of origin and of inception, which is not the logic of judgment (in so far as it precedes, as it were, any predication and any predication apophantically recuperating the origin) is, in a certain sense, outside time, if time is grasped and inscribed in the speculative logic of a genesis predicated on the basis of an recuperative apophansis. As if a kind of eternity, an immemorial inception, which then, renders time itself open wound, tearing open to the coming and arriving, to a future without horizon and without ground, to the 'monstrous coupling' of infinitude and finitude. The immemorial inception of time is not recovered in the recuperating labor of a speculative-dialectical memory, nor is sublated in a speculative-logical thought: it is there as *yet to come*, as future origin, as the possibility to begin anew through *renewal* of time that is opened in the lightning flash to which man is exposed.

This time without time, or, rather the timing of time, this inception of time itself, which is to be rigorously distinguished from the dialectical-speculative logic of genesis and generation, this eternity of time itself must be renewed in our historical presence so that our historical remembrance gives itself the task of the more originary astonishment at the origin, exposing us to the monstrous event of history. Remembrance is then nothing but the renewal of the inception: we must remember the immemorial, at each moment, so that the immemorial is renewed as a monstrous coupling. *History must remember not historical memory or memory in history, but what for history, by a necessary logic, is outside memory that must have already always erased from memory as a necessary precondition.* If historical remembrance begins with astonishment at the origin, and is not satisfied with what has arrived, what time has made of a historical existence—a cleared existence, a cleared time which has now sunk into the banality of knowable and graspable - then remembrance must have a relation to a time outside memory. While memory is memory of a past as that what has happened, remembrance—understood in a profound sense—is simultaneity of past, presence and future, and therefore we call it 'eternity'—which alone makes a historical being happy. It attunes us to a certain joyous mourning, of what Schelling once called 'divine mourning'¹². While memory makes us unhappy, remembrance is the very promise of happiness, because in the

¹² Thus Schelling says in a letter after the death of Caroline: "I now need friends who are not strangers to the real seriousness of pain and who feel that the single right and happy state of the soul is the divine mourning in which all earthly pain is immersed." "Brief Über den Tod Carolines vom 2. Oktober, 1809," in *Kleine Kommentierte Texte I*, ed. by Johann Ludwig Doderlein (Stuttgart Bad Constanz: Frommann-Holzboog, 1975).

possibility of repetition, of renewal and remembrance, the possibility of future is also given. It is the happiness in the future alone, in the promise of a coming time, and not in what has become a past, and what is presently available as these things, as this world, as this history, as this politics. Instead of mere tarrying with what has become, and confining himself with 'the gallery of images'—which Hegel thinks as the very memorial task of History - he holds himself ahead towards the promise of future, gifted to him by time, endowed him with the immemorial. Time, opening him to the coming and future, promises redemption: this gift of time is not a historical gift, nor a gift of history, but rather, man is opened to his history by a time that redeems history itself, and renders history itself an open existence, towards its redemption in the coming.

Redemption is, then, the originary openness of history itself towards its *ex-tatic* outside. Man experiences this outside, but without being able to appropriate it, in an astonishment, in wonder that opens historical memory to the far more originary remembrance of wonder, or wonder itself as remembrance. In astonishment man is opened to his opening: he sails beyond, ventures outside, begins himself anew by renewing himself; in astonishment, man remains as what he is essentially, that means, does not remain as what he already has made of himself. His is a conditioned, finite and mortal existence, but because of this very finitude, opening to the non-condition, infinite and free; he is conditioned but also creative, mortal but also open to a time yet to come. Both at once, united in him in such a monstrous coupling. He is a historical being, but also open to redemption, temporal but also open to a time beyond time, arrived but also opening that is yet to arrive, an incessant beginning of himself but also whose beginning lies outside his subjective power of appropriation, a realized existence and yet open to the not yet realized, belonging to the possible, belonging to the arriving, memorial being but also astonished by the immemorial origin of the not yet. The mortal being is at the limit of the one, and opening to the other, belonging, as it were, to the undecidable line where the line constantly limits each from the other. It is the undecidable between memory and remembrance, history and redemption, time and eternity, immanence and transcendence.

Man is someone who asks the question of his own existence. This question is inextricably bound up with the question of his mortality and his finitude. As a mortal being, he asks what he can do, out of his creative freedom. But what he can do—because he is mortal, finite being—only on the basis of an inappropriable grant, a non-economic gift, a non-masterable promise granted to him in advance. It is on the basis of what is not his capacity, mastery, or possession that mortality grants the mortals the gift of future. Only on the basis of this non-power the promise of coming that time is gifted to the mortals. While this makes mortals melancholic, this is also an occasion of his joy. To remember this gift can be the highest thanking task of the mortals.

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